

# **GOSPEL ADVANCING LEADERS: ORDINARY PEOPLE, LIVING COURAGEOUSLY**

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**GOSPEL ADVANCING VALUE #3:  
LEADERS FULLY EMBRACE AND MODEL IT**



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### GOSPEL ADVANCING MINISTRY

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Your youth group was made to advance the gospel and multiply disciples! A Gospel Advancing Ministry is one that's based on the seven time-tested, biblical values found throughout the book of Acts. These values help build a mindset—not just a method—of advancing the gospel through teenagers. Visit [gospeladvancing.org](http://gospeladvancing.org) for more information on how you can transform your youth group and reach the world for Christ, one teenager at a time.

#### DARE 2 SHARE MINISTRIES



Founded in 1991, Dare 2 Share's mission to "Energize the Church to Mobilize youth to Gospelize their world" has led them to train and provide resources to hundreds of thousands of students and youth leaders. The focus on relational evangelism training has made Dare2 Share the go-to teen evangelism training resource for youth leaders and churches globally who want a Gospel Advancing Ministry that accelerates the spiritual growth of their teens and impacts their communities with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Visit [dare2share.org](http://dare2share.org) for more information.

# GOSPEL ADVANCING MINISTRY

You pray. You plan. You use bad puns. And yet your youth ministry still isn't experiencing the spiritual and numeric growth you hoped for. Something's missing. But what?

## **A Gospel Advancing Mindset!**

Gospel Advancing Ministry is not a method or a model. It's a mindset of ministry built on seven time-tested values that can be applied in any youth ministry context.

"Go and make disciples..." was the call Jesus gave His followers. And their faithful response to this call infused a passionate intentionality for gospel advancement into the very DNA of the early church.

## **A radical new paradigm that's 2,000 years old.**

Whether you're just starting out in youth ministry or you're a ministry veteran, you have the potential to ignite that same God-given passion in your teens. They have a vital role to play in the rescue, reconciliation, and redemption of their friends.

When your students begin reaching students with the gospel, the kingdom of God will grow with new believers, your teenagers will grow in their faith, and you will experience a renewed, refreshed passion for God and youth ministry!

**This is exactly what Gospel Advancing Ministry is all about.**



*There are few things* more integral to the success of your ministry efforts than building a youth ministry leadership team that “gets it.” After all, your leadership team can’t take your students where they haven’t gone themselves!

The apostle Paul explained it this way to the believers in Corinth: *“Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ”* ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). He understood that real discipleship starts with leaders modeling what it looks like to be growing into fully devoted followers of Jesus.

That’s why Gospel Advancing Value #3—“Leaders fully embrace and model it”—zeros in on the critical importance of nurturing alignment among your leaders so that they begin to fully embrace and model the 7 Values of a Gospel Advancing Ministry.







## A GOSPEL ADVANCING DNA TRANSFER

A successful transfer of Gospel Advancing DNA to your leadership team takes effort and intentionality. You didn't arrive at your Gospel Advancing Ministry mindset overnight—no doubt your journey down this road took some prayer and processing time. So be patient as you shepherd your leaders toward a Gospel Advancing approach to youth ministry. They'll need time for prayer and processing too. They're just ordinary people who you're challenging to live a courageous Gospel Advancing lifestyle. To be honest, some of your adult and student leaders may feel like they're being pushed into this "search and rescue" mission you're on. They may have signed up simply to have fun, and all this new emphasis on intercessory prayer and relational evangelism may fall outside their comfort zone.

Still, it's your job to shepherd your leaders—both adults and students—toward Gospel Advancement. Jesus calls us to nothing less! So how do your leadership teams embrace a Gospel Advancing Ministry approach? Here are five steps to help you cast a vision and make forward progress in getting your leaders to fully embrace and model intercessory prayer and relational evangelism. These steps are applicable to both your adult and student leadership teams.

### Step 1:

#### LEAN ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

As a youth leader you may find yourself a captain of a "youth ministry ship" that's already headed full-steam ahead on what feels like a predetermined course—a course that is not as effective as you'd want it to be at making disciples who make disciples.

Moving from the status quo to a more Gospel Advancing approach to ministry can feel like you're trying to turn a massive, ocean-going vessel. It doesn't turn on a dime. Not only does it take time and effort, it takes a powerful engine. You won't make it happen just by rolling up your sleeves and exerting your own Herculean human efforts. That's why it's critical that you lean on the Holy Spirit as you lead this journey toward Gospel Advancing Youth Ministry. He is the powerful engine who must drive any course change. So take courage from Jesus' words in [Acts 1:8](#): *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* And remember His promise in [John 14:26](#): *"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

He will provide you with the wisdom and strength you need to navigate the challenge.

When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, one of His strong desires is to make all of us witnesses—including you, your leadership team and your students. He provides the power for this to happen, because He is much more serious about seeing the gospel advance than you could ever be! Now don't misunderstand...you are responsible to cast the vision for a Gospel Advancing Ministry with your leadership team—you must help them understand what Jesus tells us about sharing the Good News and making disciples. But you are not alone in this quest for deeper gospel impact in and through your students. The Holy Spirit of God is echoing your challenge from the inside.

*When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, one of His strong desires is to make all of us witnesses...*

## Step 2:

### MODEL INTERCESSORY PRAYER AND RELATIONAL EVANGELISM YOURSELF

Are you personally trying to reach out to those who don't know Jesus? Do your leaders see it in your life? **THE Cause Circle** is a simple tool that serves as a reminder and provides direction for your faith-sharing efforts. The Circle can help you personally become more relational and intentional about engaging others using a Prayer, Care, Share approach to sharing Jesus' message. It's easy to remember and helps keep the priority of sharing the gospel front and center in your relationships with those who don't know Jesus personally. [Check out this brief Cause Circle video](https://youtu.be/qZgqb8J5tVO) to learn more.



Find the video here: <https://youtu.be/qZgqb8J5tVO>

As you are personally working it out, share stories with your leaders about who you're praying for, caring for and sharing the gospel with. Talk about your faith-sharing struggles and efforts openly with your leadership team—good, bad or ugly—and invite them to join you on this journey.

## Step 3:

### CAST A GOSPEL ADVANCING MINISTRY VISION

Gather your team and watch this short video (found on the homepage of [www.gospeladvancing.org](http://www.gospeladvancing.org)) explaining a Gospel Advancing Ministry mindset. Dare 2 Share's [free PDF summary explaining Gospel Advancing Ministry](#) is another great resource you can print and pass out to your team (find it in the Free eBook Resources at [Dare2Share.org](http://Dare2Share.org)). Share from your heart why you're personally committed to this approach to youth ministry. This may seem a little awkward initially, but know that as the leader, your adult and student teams are looking to you to provide vision and direction.



If possible, fold in stories of students' changed lives to illustrate your Gospel Advancing vision. Stories of impact provide encouragement and inspiration. Open the floor for discussion. Spend time praying together for the gospel to advance in and through your students.

## Step 4:

### **PROVIDE GOSPEL ADVANCING LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

Scheduled Leadership Development training and planning times provide a great opportunity to continue nurturing buy-in for the Gospel Advancing vision, provide relevant training and bring your leadership teams into the prayer and planning process, as appropriate. Your goal should be to infuse so much value into your leadership meetings that they become a ministry highlight for your leaders. With the right amount of effort upfront on your part, no one on your team should ever walk away from a meeting thinking, "That was a waste of my time." Your leadership meetings should overflow with opportunities for vision casting, team alignment, skills training, prayer, planning and fellowship. Student leadership teams can be incorporated into your Adult Leadership Team meetings, occasionally or routinely, depending on your context. It requires a little extra planning, but their insight into the ministry is very valuable. Plus, they'll benefit from the vision casting and training aspects of your meetings.

Here are a few practical suggestions for how you might approach your leadership gatherings:

#### **PRAY TOGETHER.**

When you gather as a leadership team, spend time in intercessory prayer before you drill down into training or planning for upcoming events. Prepare and empower your key leaders to run some of the prayer and planning times. This gives a ton of ownership to your leaders and enables them to add their own personality within the vision of the ministry.

#### **ADDRESS YOUR LEADERS' EVANGEPHOBIA.**

If you sense any discomfort with evangelism among your leadership, it's important to name the elephant in the room and lay out the biblical foundation for a Gospel Advancing Ministry mindset. Many Christians—even those who call themselves "evangelicals" and consider themselves "leaders"—struggle with evangelism personally,



or tend to think of it as an intolerant remnant from the past. Have a candid conversation with your leaders about any “evangelophobia” they may harbor personally. Unpack some of the following reasons why many Christians find sharing their faith challenging and learn from Scripture together how to begin to move past these issues:

- **Fear.** Fear of rejection looms large for everyone. But prayer is the antidote for fear. Plus, Scripture promises that God goes with us and provides His power as we share His love and truth with others. ([2 Timothy 1:7-8](#), [Isaiah 41:13](#); [Psalm 27:1](#); [Hebrews 13:6](#); [John 14:27](#).)
- **Live and let live attitude.** Some Christians have bought into the perception that initiating spiritual conversations is inappropriate, intolerant or intrusive. Yet evangelism is about giving away the best news on the planet. At the core of every human is a gaping hole—a hole that can be temporarily filled with stuff, sports, sin or whatever. Jesus has called us to be His ambassadors and help others fill that invisible, unquenchable need for God by sharing the gospel with them. It’s not intolerant to share the truth with others. It’s a gift we must learn to give away. ([2 Corinthians 5:14-20](#); [John 20:21](#); [1 Peter 3:18](#); [Hebrews 13:12](#).)
- **Anybody but me!** Many Christians grew up thinking that sharing the gospel is the pastor’s job. But there’s no getting away from the reality that Jesus has called all of us to do this! It can’t get much plainer than His word in [John 20:21](#): “*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*”
- **I won’t know what to say.** Don’t assume that your adult leaders know how explain the gospel. Train them on how to share it from take-off to touchdown. There are many great approaches to doing this. At Dare 2 Share, we use the GOSPEL acrostic, but you can choose whatever works best for you. ([1 Peter 3:15](#).)
- **Lack of urgency.** We like to shut out the reality of hell, but Jesus didn’t. He had plenty to say about the consequences of a life lived apart from Him—both here and now, and for all eternity. Advancing the gospel is urgent business. ([Matthew 24:36-44](#), [2 Peter 3:10-15](#) and [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#).)

## PROVIDE RELATIONAL EVANGELISM TRAINING.

As already mentioned, you will likely need to train your leaders how to share the gospel. Greg Stier’s [A 4 Minute Crash Course in Sharing Your Faith](#) video is a great overview of the basics of sharing your faith. Additionally, the free [Dare 2 Share mobile app](#) provides a deeper



dive into relational evangelism. The training in the app will significantly amp up your leaders' relational evangelism skills.



Find the video here: <https://youtu.be/HK9IsiEcW7k>

### ENCOURAGE MODELING.

Obviously, it's important that your leaders embrace the priority of relational evangelism in their own lives, but a big component of modeling this for your students involves making sure they actually hear about—or better yet, see—their leaders' faith-sharing efforts. This can take a lot of different forms, but the following example provides one sample scenario...

Attending the extracurricular events of the students in their small groups can provide opportunities to model initiating spiritual conversations. Clearly communicate to your leaders the value of supporting youth group students in this way. Encourage your adults to sit with other students from your group (and hopefully, their unchurched friends.) Teach your leaders how to make the most of these outings and how to purposefully look for opportunities during these events to strike up conversations with bystanders that point people toward Jesus. This can be as simple as initiating a dialogue that goes something like this:

Youth Group Leader to Random Bystander: *"Who are you here to support and encourage?"*

Bystander: *"My friends/sister/etc...."*

Youth Group Leader: *"Cool. I'm here to support \_\_\_\_\_. She's in the youth group at my church. Do you have a church?"*

Bystander: *"No, I'm not really into church."*

Youth Group Leader: *"Tell me more. Are you spiritual...do you believe in God, but just don't like the church scene...? What do you believe about God? Have you ever been to church...? Did you have a bad experience...? What happened...?"*

Not only will your leaders be engaging in evangelism for the sake of the bystander, they will be modeling for the youth group members nearby how to initiate spiritual conversations! Then encourage your adults to share about their faith-sharing efforts during your youth group's **Take 5 for THE Cause** times, or build in opportunities for them to share their stories during small group times. The more your students see and hear about your leaders' outreach efforts, the more quickly the culture in your youth group will shift toward gospel advancement.



## UTILIZE GOSPEL ADVANCING RESOURCES.

Another easy option to help build team alignment is to go through Dare 2 Share's free 12-part [Gospelize Your Team video series](#). Each video includes a practical action step your team can take immediately. And if you want to take your team to the next level, tap into some of Dare 2 Share's other Gospel Advancing resources like our free [webinars](#), the book [Gospelize Your Youth Ministry](#), our one-day, multi-site simulcast event, [Dare 2 Share LIVE](#), or our [Lead THE Cause](#) week-long, summer training events.

Everyone is busy. It's a truth of life today. But people find time for the things they value, so don't apologize about asking your leaders to make time for Gospel Advancing Leadership Training for the sake of your students. Do your best to find the "least bad time" for your leadership team to meet regularly, and then go for it with enthusiasm. Identify the obstacles to participation that will likely come up, like food and childcare (for your adult team members) and do everything in your power to address these issues. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for your team to participate. It will take a bit of work on your part, but it will be worth it. If food is an issue, recruit a team of volunteers to provide a meal. If childcare is an issue, recruit a childcare team to help. If you can't find people who will volunteer to watch the kids, you might want to set aside some of the youth ministry budget to cover the cost.

## Step 5:

### BE THE COACH

An effective coach inspires and helps team members master the basic skills. Listen to the Holy Spirit as you work to help your leaders adopt a lifestyle of relational evangelism, so you know when to prompt and when to be patient. Stay Connected. Pursue your leaders through text and social media. Ask them, *"Who can I be praying for today that you are trying to reach with the gospel?"* This offers three benefits:



- Your leaders will be reminded to stay engaged in sharing the gospel.
- They will be encouraged through your prayer support.
- Prayer changes things by opening hearts and minds!

Regularly sharing about your own efforts gives you a solid foundation for asking and expecting them to do the same. Assure them that they don't have to be prayer and evangelism experts. They just need to love Jesus, have a heart for the lost and talk about the gospel—out loud, with words. People need accountability—including you—so ask them to pray for you as you are engaging others with the gospel.

Like any good coach, sometimes you're called on to recruit the right talent—because inevitably, leaders cycle out or graduate, or because your group is growing by leaps and bounds and you need more help. Let's unpack what this might look like.



### DON'T ANNOUNCE THE NEED.

The church needs to provide opportunities for its members to volunteer and minister in Jesus' name. This allows for the body of believers to widen its reach; it offers great ways for people to grow in their gifts and live out their calling—especially since staff members oftentimes have to wear so many hats (e.g., preacher, administrator, counselor, janitor, etc.). Having some help can greatly strengthen your ministry, but be careful about how you decide to announce your need!

Announcing on Sunday morning that you need adult youth ministry volunteers may sound quick and easy, but it can potentially create some major problems. Similarly, announcing in youth group that you're looking for student leaders can seriously side-track your Gospel Advancing efforts. Some people, no matter how kindhearted, fun-loving, talented or charming, aren't meant to be in youth ministry leadership. Think of the years of terrible singers who continue to audition on *American Idol* despite their lack of talent (or awareness, for that matter). You want leaders whose walk with Jesus is growing, so don't put out a signup sheet where anyone can have a slot for the asking. And don't put yourself in a position where you have to give reasons for why someone isn't good enough for the leadership team. This can end up really hurting someone who otherwise could have been motivated to serve in another area of ministry.

### IDENTIFY WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.

What type of people are you looking for? In many ways, this will be based on factors like availability, reliability and relatable authenticity. However, every youth ministry will vary slightly on what this looks like. For instance, you definitely need a healthy male and female balance. But at the core of what you decide to look for should be individuals who can get wholeheartedly behind the [7 Values of a Gospel Advancing Ministry](#).

Ideally, you want volunteers who have a *high will* and *high skill*. In other words, these are the kinds of leaders who are passionate about youth ministry and already know what to do. But if you find yourself in a situation where skill is not available, then focus your attention on people who still have a *high will* to help. *Low skill* people, for the most part, can be trained; willingness, on the other hand, cannot be forced out of anyone. *Low will* leaders—even if they seem like they have a lot going for them (i.e., young and gifted)—will be ineffective Gospel Advancing leaders if they don't have any commitment to serving Jesus and students.



## SCOUT FOR PEOPLE.

Once you've established your criteria, scout out potential leaders within your church. Try inviting them out to coffee so that you can get to know them better and share the vision for your youth ministry. Share why building a Gospel Advancing Ministry matters. The gospel is the hope of the world. Without it, young people are left in hopelessness and spiritual darkness—now and forever. Share how you believe teenagers are more effective at reaching teenagers than adults can ever be, which is why motivating and mobilizing the students in your ministry to reach their friends with the gospel will impact more lives than you ever could all by yourself. With adults, talk about [Titus 2:1-6](#), where the older men and women are challenged to pour into the younger generation. With potential student leaders, help them understand that they have opportunities to reach their peers that you don't, so they have an incredibly important role to play! Watch to see if those you approach connect with these truths.

## PRAY FOR WISDOM.

Ultimately, Scripture reminds us that if we lack wisdom all we need to do is ask our Heavenly Father ([James 1:6](#)). Don't let yourself become frustrated with who to choose or how to go about it. Remember, every youth ministry will look different and there isn't a perfect answer for how to go about getting the perfect adult leaders for your own ministry. Repeatedly in Scripture, we see that prayer provides results. God will give you wisdom if you ask.

## A GOSPEL ADVANCING THERMOSTAT

As Greg Stier puts it, "You and your leaders are the default thermostat for how much disciple-multiplying heat you are applying towards your youth ministry." When cranked up high, your students will tend to be the same way. But if the gospel-advancing thermostat is set to low, then your students will most likely be the same way.

Infusing your leadership team with the DNA of the 7 Values of a Gospel Advancing Ministry will crank that thermostat up! It will provide a sense of unity as a result of your common Gospel Advancing vision and will help keep your weekly youth group times focused on maximizing the spiritual impact of all you do.

Is it possible that your Gospel Advancing emphasis will make some of your leaders so uncomfortable that they resign? It's possible. But identifying and growing the leaders who are willing to make intercessory prayer and relational evangelism a high priority in their own lives will ultimately help you build a thriving Gospel Advancing Ministry. Ordinary people courageously striving to advance the gospel in their own lives are the kind of leaders you want to pour into, because they will have the greatest life-on-life impact when it comes to helping teenagers adopt a lifestyle of evangelism.

*"You and your leaders are the default thermostat for how much disciple-multiplying heat you are applying towards your youth ministry."*

– Greg Stier



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